

Exploring Empowerment Dynamics in the Lebanese Banking Sector: A Structural, Motivational, and Contingency Perspective

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Received : 7/8/2024

Accepted : 11/8/2024

Published : 15/8/2024

Cite this article as: El Hajj, Mireille Chidiac; Makhoulf, Rabih Bedwany; Exploring Empowerment Dynamics in the Lebanese Banking Sector: A Structural, Motivational, and Contingency Perspective; ElQarar Journal For Refereed Scientific Research, vol 3, issue 8, 2024, pp. 1014-1049.

 0009-0006-8488-5433

Abstract

Amidst Lebanon's enduring economic and financial crises, this study explores the complexities of empowerment within the Lebanese banking sector. It scrutinizes empowerment dynamics through the lenses of structural, motivational, and contingency theories, exploring how organizational structures, individual motivations, and environmental contingencies intersect to shape empowerment outcomes among banking sector employees. Utilizing a quantitative survey conducted with 200 employees from Lebanon's top banking institutions, the study reveals significant correlations between structural variables such as job roles, hierarchical arrangements, and organizational support mechanisms, and psychological empowerment components including self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, and social support. The findings underscore the importance of cultivating empowering work environments marked by decentralized decision-making, clear role delineation, and supportive organizational climates, particularly amidst economic uncertainty. Offering valuable insights into empowerment dynamics within the Lebanese banking sector, this study presents practical implications for organizational leaders and policymakers seeking to bolster employee engagement, resilience, and organizational effectiveness amidst challenging economic conditions.

Keywords: Empowerment dynamics, organizational behavior, structural approach, motivational approach, contingency theory.

Résumé

Dans le contexte des crises économiques et financières persistantes au Liban, cette étude examine les subtilités de l'autonomisation au sein du secteur bancaire libanais. L'étude analyse les dynamiques d'autonomisation à travers les théories structurelles, motivationnelles et de contingence. Elle explore comment les structures organisationnelles, les motivations individuelles et les contingences environnementales s'entrecroisent pour façonner les résultats de l'autonomisation parmi les employés du secteur bancaire. À travers une enquête quantitative menée auprès de 200 employés travaillant dans des principales institutions bancaires du Liban, l'étude révèle des corrélations significatives entre les variables structurelles telles que les rôles professionnels, les arrangements hiérarchiques et les mécanismes de soutien organisationnel, et les composantes de l'autonomisation psychologique incluant l'auto-efficacité, la motivation intrinsèque et le soutien social. Les résultats soulignent l'importance de favoriser des environnements de travail autonomisant caractérisés par une prise de décision décentralisée, une définition claire des rôles et des climats organisationnels de soutien, notamment face à l'incertitude économique. En fournissant des perspectives précieuses sur les dynamiques d'autonomisation dans le secteur bancaire libanais, cette étude offre des implications pratiques pour les dirigeants organisationnels et les décideurs politiques visant à améliorer l'engagement des employés, leur résilience et l'efficacité organisationnelle dans des conditions économiques difficiles.

Mots clés: Dynamiques d'autonomisation, comportement organisationnel, approche structurelle, approche motivationnelle, théorie de la contingence.

1– Introduction

In the ever-evolving landscape of modern organizations, the concept of empowerment has emerged as a pivotal force shaping human resource management and organizational behavior. Its multifaceted nature has garnered significant attention for its potential to navigate the complexities of contemporary workplaces amidst rapid changes, restructuring endeavors, and mounting pressures (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Kanter, 1983; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). This study aims to elucidate how organizational structures, individual motivations, and environmental contingencies interact to shape empowerment outcomes within the Lebanese banking sector amidst economic and financial crises.

The Lebanese banking sector, historically known for its resilience and stability in the region, has recently faced significant challenges. Economic downturns, political instability, and currency devaluation have created a volatile environment for financial institutions. The sector grapples with liquidity shortages, capital controls, and uncertainty surrounding government policies, all of which profoundly impact organizational dynamics and employee experiences. Despite these challenges, the Lebanese banking sector is undergoing workforce reductions and consolidating branch networks, previously considered excessive for the country's needs. This restructuring has resulted in a significant 35% decrease in the sector's workforce from 2019 to the end of 2022, with each branch closure typically affecting 5 to 15 jobs. Additionally, amidst inflation rates nearing 200%, employee wages have sharply declined, exacerbating economic strain (Hage Boutros, January 2024). Consequently, the remaining social benefits provided by banks fall short of adequately mitigating these challenges. As Lebanon strives for stability, comprehensive support for employees becomes crucial (Chami, 2023).

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Moreover, rebuilding trust in Lebanese banks is paramount. Transparency, accountability, enhanced regulation, and robust customer protection measures are essential for restoring confidence among depositors, investors, and the public. Equally critical are ethical conduct, professionalism, and social responsibility. Implementing these strategies can gradually rebuild trust and confidence among stakeholders, significantly enhancing the sector's stability and sustainability.

In this context, banks must explore empowerment dynamics to retain employees who may otherwise seek better opportunities elsewhere. By embracing structural, motivational, and contingency approaches, banks can foster a supportive environment that enhances job satisfaction, loyalty, and productivity. Empowerment initiatives provide employees with a sense of control and purpose, making them less likely to leave, even amidst challenging economic conditions.

Understanding empowerment dynamics within the Lebanese banking sector is crucial for navigating its turbulent landscape. This study elucidates how organizational structures adapt, individual motivations evolve, and empowerment outcomes are influenced amidst challenging circumstances. These insights carry practical implications for organizational leaders and managers. By comprehending the interplay between structural factors, motivational aspects, and environmental contingencies, organizations can devise strategies to cultivate a culture of empowerment that fosters enhanced employee engagement, productivity, and overall organizational effectiveness. Moreover, these findings would help inform policy decisions and interventions aimed at navigating economic uncertainties, thereby ensuring organizational resilience and sustainability. Empowerment in Lebanon's banking sector could significantly enhance organizational resilience, promote workforce well-being, foster competitive advantage, retain talent, and facilitate regulatory

compliance through increased transparency and accountability among employees. Therefore, this study was conducted to shed light on these critical dynamics.

This paper is organized as follows: Section 2 introduces the theoretical background by considering three distinct approaches to empowerment, aimed at helping organizations develop comprehensive strategies to foster a culture of empowerment, enhance employee engagement, and navigate the complexities of modern workplaces more effectively. Section 3 describes the methodology, illustrating the research context, data collection, and analysis. The findings are reported in Section 4, proposing the empowerment dynamic capabilities framework, and then discussed in Section 5. Section 6 concludes by addressing the implications, limitations, and directions for future research.

2– Toward Empowerment Approaches

Combining insights from political theory and social psychology, we define empowerment as the process by which individuals gain the ability to mobilize resources to achieve their goals (Alkire, 2005, 2007; Avelino, 2017; Avelino et al., 2017; Sen, 1985, 1999). This process involves (i) obtaining access to resources and (ii) developing the capacity and willingness to use these resources effectively. In contrast, disempowerment is the process by which individuals lose access, capacity, and willingness (Avelino et al., 2017). Resources are broadly defined, encompassing people, assets, materials, or capital, including human, mental, financial, artifactual, and natural resources (Avelino & Rotmans, 2009).

Empowerment within organizational contexts is multifaceted, often examined through various theoretical lenses. These perspectives provide valuable insights into how individuals perceive empowerment within their work environments. Three

primary approaches to empowerment stand out: the structural approach, the motivational approach, and the contingency approach.

The structural approach links empowerment to the organizational context, emphasizing features like job variety, autonomy, workload distribution, support mechanisms, and hierarchical arrangements as key factors. The motivational approach, on the other hand, focuses on psychological factors such as self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, and social support, highlighting the role of individual beliefs and relationships. The contingency approach suggests that the most effective organizational structure for empowerment varies based on external environmental demands, stressing the need for flexibility and adaptability, especially during crises or changes.

We consider empowerment as a dynamic process (Rappaport, 1987; Zimmerman et al., 1992) that depends on conditions enabling individuals and groups to develop and sustain the psychological resources necessary to pursue meaningful goals. A critical aspect of understanding empowerment is acknowledging three fundamental psychological needs found universally across cultures, as outlined in self-determination theory (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2002): autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy entails the ability to make independent choices and act in accordance with personal values and identity. Relatedness involves feeling connected to and supported by a social group. Competence is about achieving mastery and feeling effective in one's actions (Bidee et al., 2013).

In this framework, organizations can develop comprehensive strategies to cultivate a culture of empowerment, boost employee engagement, and effectively navigate

the complexities of modern workplaces. By embracing various approaches to empowerment, organizations gain valuable insights into the mechanisms that drive empowerment, allowing them to tailor their initiatives to meet the specific needs of their workforce and organizational context.

2-1- Structural Approach to Empowerment

The structural approach views empowerment as intricately intertwined with the organizational context, positing that individuals' sense of empowerment is shaped by the opportunities and constraints inherent in their work environments (Smith, 2023). This perspective emphasizes various structural features such as job variety, autonomy, workload distribution, organizational support mechanisms, and hierarchical arrangements, all of which play crucial roles in influencing employees' empowerment dynamics.

In examining empowerment within organizational contexts, the structural approach elucidates the intricate relationship between organizational structures and the empowerment of individuals (Giddens, 1984; Kanter, 1983; Marx, 1964; Lawler, 1992). Within sectors characterized by centralized decision-making and formalized procedures, such as banking, structural elements like job roles, hierarchical arrangements, and organizational processes significantly shape employees' empowerment dynamics.

Job variety stands as a crucial determinant of empowerment. Employees exposed to diverse tasks and responsibilities are more likely to feel empowered, possessing a broader scope of influence and autonomy in their roles (Mintzberg, 1975). Conversely, in environments with narrowly defined roles and highly specialized tasks, employees may experience disempowerment due to limited opportunities for

growth and self-directed action.

The distribution of workload also influences employees' empowerment experiences. Excessive workloads, rigid timelines, and performance expectations can leave employees feeling overwhelmed and disempowered (Karasek, 1979). Conversely, a balanced workload that allows for adequate time and resources fosters a sense of competence and efficacy among employees, thereby enhancing empowerment levels. Moreover, organizational support, including training opportunities, mentorship programs, and recognition systems, plays a crucial role in shaping empowerment. In environments lacking consistent organizational support, employees may feel undervalued and disconnected from the organizational mission, leading to diminished empowerment levels (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Hierarchical arrangements within organizations also contribute to empowerment dynamics. In rigid hierarchical structures, communication channels are often vertical, limiting opportunities for collaboration and information sharing among employees (Fayol, 1916). This communication pattern can hinder employees' ability to voice their opinions and contribute to decision-making processes, impeding their sense of empowerment.

This discussion aligns with previous research findings and theoretical frameworks, which suggest that the centralization within organizational structures can be negatively associated with employees' empowerment (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967). Decision-making concentrated at higher management levels diminishes employee autonomy and their sense of impact, highlighting the importance of considering structural elements in fostering empowerment within organizations. This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Increased centralization within organizational structures is negatively associated with employees' perceived empowerment.

In this respect, centralization, characterized by decision-making concentrated at higher management levels, is expected to diminish employee autonomy and reduce their sense of impact on organizational outcomes (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967).

2-2- Motivational Approach to Empowerment

The motivational approach to empowerment places a significant emphasis on individual psychological factors, such as self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation, as critical determinants of empowerment outcomes (Bandura, 1982; Locke et al., 2002; Ozer & Bandura, 1990; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Particularly in contexts characterized by economic instability and organizational restructuring, such as the banking sector, employees' self-efficacy beliefs play a pivotal role in shaping their experiences of empowerment (Eisenberger et al., 1986). High levels of self-efficacy empower employees to perceive themselves as capable of overcoming challenges and achieving desired outcomes despite structural constraints, thereby fostering proactive engagement and a willingness to pursue growth opportunities. Additionally, intrinsic motivation, rooted in individuals' inherent desire to engage in activities for their own sake, drives empowerment-seeking behaviors, such as taking on challenging tasks and participating in decision-making processes (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Moreover, the motivational approach underscores the significance of social support and feedback in fostering empowerment (Gouldner, 1960). Supportive relationships with colleagues and supervisors bolster employees' confidence and sense

of empowerment, particularly in times of heightened stress and uncertainty. Positive feedback and recognition reaffirm employees' beliefs in their capabilities and motivate continued excellence. These psychological factors not only contribute to employees' sense of empowerment but also have implications for their productivity levels. A study conducted in a bank revealed that psychological empowerment, particularly through enhancing self-efficacy and a sense of meaningfulness, significantly improves customer orientation among frontline employees (Esslimani & Igalens, 2008).

The strong correlation between employee empowerment and productivity is pivotal for organizational success and performance (Roghanian et al., 2012; Ghate et al., 2016; Hanaysha, 2016a; Preenen et al., 2015). Empowerment involves delegating decision-making authority and responsibility to employees, resulting in increased productivity and organizational growth (Tulloch, 1993; Ripley & Ripley, 1992; Asgarsani et al., 2013). Empowered employees typically exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment, contributing to enhanced productivity (Jacquiline, 2014; Hanaysha, 2016b; Nwachukwu et al., 2021). Moreover, empowerment nurtures feelings of pride, self-respect, and self-worth among employees, reinforcing their dedication to organizational objectives (Ripley & Ripley, 1992; Hanaysha, 2016b).

The motivational approach underscores the importance of individual psychological factors in fostering empowerment and driving productivity within organizations. By nurturing employees' self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, and providing social support and feedback, organizations can create an environment conducive to both empowerment and productivity. This leads us to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Higher levels of self-efficacy among employees positively predict their empowerment levels, buffering against the negative impacts of organizational structures (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Gouldner, 1960).

2-3- Contingency Theory and Empowerment

Contingency theory, a pivotal framework in organizational studies, asserts that the optimal organizational structure is contingent upon various environmental factors (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Donaldson, 2001). According to this theory, organizations must tailor their structures to suit the demands of their external environment.

During times of crisis, such as economic downturns or market fluctuations, the need for organizational flexibility becomes paramount (Hitt et al., 2008). From an empowerment perspective, contingency theory suggests that organizations facing crises may benefit from adopting more flexible and decentralized structures to empower their employees effectively (Fiedler, 1967). By decentralizing decision-making authority and fostering adaptability, organizations can empower employees to respond swiftly and innovatively to changing circumstances (Gonzalez & Guillen, 2008).

In sectors grappling with economic uncertainty and market volatility, the alignment between organizational structures and environmental demands holds significant implications for employee empowerment. Organizations that successfully align their structures with the fluctuating economic landscape may create an environment conducive to employee empowerment (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006). Amidst the current crisis, such as the economic downturn, political instability, and currency devaluation, the need for organizational flexibility and adaptability becomes even

more pronounced, particularly in sectors like banking.

The Lebanese banking sector, historically known for its resilience and stability, has recently been confronted with significant challenges due to the ongoing crisis. Economic downturns, political instability, and currency devaluation have created a volatile environment for financial institutions, impacting organizational dynamics and employee experiences (Mishkin & Eakins, 2015). In this context, the alignment between organizational structures and environmental demands becomes crucial for navigating the challenges posed by the crisis and fostering employee empowerment effectively. Organizations that can adapt their structures to suit the demands of the current crisis, such as adopting more flexible and decentralized decision-making processes, are better positioned to empower their employees to navigate the uncertainty and contribute effectively to organizational resilience and sustainability (Mudambi & Zahra, 2007).

Hypothesis 3 would therefore be as follows: The alignment between organizational structures and environmental demands positively correlates with employees' empowerment levels. Organizations that adopt more flexible and decentralized structures during economic crises are better positioned to empower employees effectively.

By empirically testing these hypotheses within the Lebanese banking sector, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the mechanisms driving empowerment dynamics in the face of economic challenges. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for informing tailored interventions and organizational practices aimed at enhancing employee empowerment, resilience, and well-being amidst the evolving landscape of Lebanese banks.

3– Methodology

This study addresses a critical gap in the literature by examining empowerment dynamics within the Lebanese banking sector, an area with limited attention in socio-cultural and psychological empowerment research. Previous studies, such as Costa et al. (2023) and Sarieedine (2016), have explored topics like domestic violence in Lebanon, but broader empowerment dynamics remain under-examined. Insights from Blaique et al. (2023) highlight the importance of psychological and socio-cultural empowerment during crises, like the COVID-19 pandemic. Psychological empowerment, characterized by autonomy and self-efficacy, equips individuals with the confidence to navigate uncertainties, while socio-cultural empowerment fosters inclusivity and a sense of belonging, crucial for creating supportive environments. Recognizing these dimensions' significance, particularly in Lebanon's context of economic and political challenges, is imperative for organizations seeking to promote resilience and employee well-being. To comprehensively investigate employee empowerment within Lebanon's banking sector, we employed a mixed-methods approach.

3-1-Participants and Procedures: This study aims to capture various dimensions of employee empowerment and demographic characteristics prevalent in Lebanon's banking industry. Data collection took place from June 2023 to September 2023, targeting employees across different banks. The initial sample comprised 200 randomly selected individuals from various branches and departments within the banking sector. Out of these, 167 employees completed the survey, resulting in an effective response rate of 83.5%. The participants represented a diverse cross-section of the banking workforce, including various age groups, genders, educational backgrounds, and levels of experience.

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3-2-Measures: Empowerment and demographic characteristics were assessed to gain insights into empowerment dynamics within the Lebanese banking sector. Empowerment was evaluated through two distinct measures: Structural Empowerment and Psychological Empowerment.

– **Structural Empowerment:** Assessed using a condensed version of the Condition of Work Effectiveness Questionnaire (CWEQ), adapted from Kanter’s theory. This questionnaire consisted of 15 items measured on a 5-point Likert scale, capturing aspects such as access to resources, decision-making authority, and opportunities for professional growth. A total of 12 distinct variables were identified across these constructs to comprehensively assess structural empowerment within the Lebanese banking sector.

– **Psychological Empowerment:** Measured using a 12-item scale based on Spreitzer’s validated framework, designed to gauge perceptions of autonomy, competence, impact, meaning, self-efficacy, and self-determination within organizational roles. Both measures utilized a 5-point Likert scale, enabling detailed insights into the psychological dimensions of empowerment experiences among survey participants in the banking sector.

Demographic characteristics, including age, gender, educational background, tenure within the banking sector, and seniority level within the organization, were gathered through structured questions. These demographic insights complemented the empowerment measures, providing a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing empowerment within the study context.

3-3- Data Collection and Analysis:

Survey Administration: To ensure ethical compliance and participant consent,

permission was obtained from relevant managers within the banking institutions before administering a structured survey to selected employees. The survey questions were distributed in all three languages – Arabic, French, and English – to ensure inclusivity and comprehensive participation across the diverse linguistic landscape of the Lebanese banking sector (See Appendix 1). From June 2023 to September 2023, we conducted data collection aimed at capturing various dimensions of employee empowerment and prevalent demographic characteristics within Lebanon’s banking industry. The responses were then gathered and analyzed to provide a holistic understanding of the factors influencing employee empowerment. Our goal was to analyze empowerment dynamics within organizational contexts to offer insights that could inform strategies for fostering a supportive and empowering work environment.

Data Analysis: To derive meaningful insights from the dataset, a comprehensive statistical analysis was conducted. The steps included:

a– Reliability Testing: The internal consistency of the measurement scales was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient, resulting in a value of 0.814, indicating high reliability and internal consistency.

b– Descriptive Statistics: Descriptive statistics were computed to provide an overview of the dataset and highlight key trends and patterns in the responses.

c– Correlation Analysis: Correlation analysis was employed to examine the relationship between structural and psychological empowerment, elucidating the strength and direction of associations between these constructs and demographic variables.

d– Regression Analysis: Two regression analyses were conducted to identify

significant predictors of psychological empowerment and vice versa. The regression models aimed to uncover the factors contributing to employees' sense of empowerment within the banking sector.

e- Missing Data Handling: Appropriate techniques were employed to handle missing data, ensuring its minimal influence on results and conclusions.

By adopting a mixed methods approach and integrating quantitative surveys, this study aims to comprehensively explore employee empowerment within Lebanon's banking sector. The rigorous methodology provided valuable insights into the factors influencing empowerment, with implications for organizational practices and policies aimed at promoting well-being and resilience amidst ongoing challenges in the Alpha Lebanese banks.

3-4-The Banking Sector: A Look at the Alpha Banks

Our study focuses on the 14 Alpha banks in Lebanon, collectively holding a significant 87% share of the country's banking assets as of September 2017. These banks had been pillars of Lebanon's financial sector, critical for its economic stability and growth. However, amidst persistent political turbulence and economic challenges, the banking industry faces heightened scrutiny and pressure, impacting not only its financial health but also its workforce. The well-being and empowerment of employees within these institutions are paramount, as they directly influence organizational resilience and the broader economic landscape. Therefore, investing in both structural and psychological empowerment within these banks is crucial, not only for the welfare of employees but also for shaping Lebanon's economic trajectory positively amidst ongoing challenges.

The 14 Alpha banks in Lebanon, despite holding a significant share of the coun-

try's banking assets, find themselves navigating a multifaceted financial landscape fraught with challenges. These challenges encompass aspects of asset quality, profitability, and operational efficiency, all of which have implications for the stability and sustainability of these financial institutions. Notably, despite their substantial market presence, these banks encounter considerable hurdles in managing impairment losses on loans, indicating underlying concerns regarding the quality of their loan portfolios. This issue is further compounded by the persistent pressure of the cost of risk, which continues to erode profitability margins. Moreover, efficiency metrics underscore the imperative for these banks to streamline operational expenses and enhance their cost-effectiveness to remain competitive in a dynamic market environment. While the Alpha banks maintain a robust core deposit base, they are confronted with the daunting task of navigating through economic uncertainties and evolving regulatory landscapes. These external factors, coupled with internal challenges, underscore the critical importance of fostering resilience and adaptability within these banking institutions (alphabanks, 2024).

4- Findings

Survey Instrument Reliability: The survey instrument's reliability was assessed using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, resulting in a value of 0.814, indicative of high reliability and internal consistency. This demonstrates that the survey instrument effectively captured the intended constructs of both structural and psychological empowerment.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Empowerment Variables

Variable	Mean Score	Interpretation
Sociopolitical Support	3.60	Moderately supportive organizational climate
Role Clarity	4.00	Clear understanding of roles and responsibilities
Employee Tenure	Diverse Distribution	Various lengths of service among employees

This table provides insights into the organizational climate and employee characteristics within Lebanese banks. The mean scores offer a snapshot of perceived levels of sociopolitical support and role clarity among employees. Additionally, the diverse distribution of employee tenure highlights a dynamic workforce in the sector.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis Results (Structural Variables and Psychological Empowerment)

Variable	Correlation (r)	p-value	Interpretation
Sociopolitical Support	0.489	<0.01	Strong positive correlation with psychological empowerment
Promotion Opportunities	0.396	<0.1	Positive correlation with psychological empowerment
Rewards	0.412	<0.01	Positive correlation with psychological empowerment
Role Clarity	0.434	<0.01	Strong positive correlation with psychological empowerment

The correlations in this table shed highlight the relationship between structural variables and psychological empowerment, underscoring the role of factors like sociopolitical support, promotion opportunities, rewards, and role clarity in enhancing employees' empowerment in Lebanese banks.

Table 3: Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	Sig.	Interpretation
Structural Predictors of Psychological Empowerment	0.641	0.411	0.349	6.647	<0.01	Significant predictors include sociopolitical support, seniority level, and role clarity
Psychological Predictors of Structural Empowerment	0.494	0.244	0.225	12.525	<0.001	Significant predictors include self-efficacy, meaning, and impact

This regression model summary provides insights into factors predicting psychological empowerment, with significant predictors such as sociopolitical support, seniority level, role clarity, self-efficacy, meaning, and impact shaping empowerment dynamics in Lebanese banks.

Table 4: Regression Coefficients for Predicting Psychological Empowerment

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Standard Error	t Value	Sig.	Interpretation
Sociopolitical Support	0.941	0.303	3.105	0.002	Positive influence
Seniority Level	1.453	0.551	2.636	0.009	Higher seniority, higher empowerment
Role Clarity	1.984	0.627	3.165	0.002	Clear roles lead to higher empowerment

These coefficients quantify the relationships between predictor variables and psychological empowerment, emphasizing the positive impact of sociopolitical support, seniority level, and role clarity on empowerment levels among employees.

Table 5: Correlation Analysis Results (Structural Variables, Demographic Variables, and Psychological Empowerment)

Constructs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.Sociopolitical Support	1.00						
2.Role Clarity	0.489	1.00					
3.Promotion Opportunities	0.396*	0.434	1.00				
4.Rewards	0.412	0.457	0.510	1.00			
5.Age	0.234*	0.201*	0.156	0.087	1.00		
6.Experience	0.276	0.312	0.245*	0.298	0.361	1.00	
7.Seniority Level	0.315	0.287	0.401	0.345	0.278	0.309	1.00

*Note: * $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.001$. Significant correlations are indicated.

This correlation analysis integrates demographic variables with structural factors, revealing associations between variables such as age, experience, seniority level, and psychological empowerment. Older, more experienced, and higher-ranking employees tend to report higher levels of empowerment, highlighting the complex interplay between individual demographics

These findings support all 3 hypotheses related to the significant impact of structural variables and psychological empowerment components on overall empowerment levels within the banking sector. The interplay between these factors underscores the importance of organizational structures and psychological factors in fostering employee empowerment and organizational effectiveness.

5-Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the multifaceted nature of empowerment within the Lebanese banking sector from structural, motivational, and contingency

perspectives. By examining various dimensions such as organizational climate, role clarity, promotion opportunities, rewards, and demographic factors, the study identified key elements influencing employees' sense of empowerment. Correlation and regression analyses revealed significant positive relationships between structural variables, demographic characteristics, and empowerment. This comprehensive understanding allows organizations to develop targeted interventions and policies that promote employee empowerment, ultimately leading to enhanced organizational effectiveness, employee satisfaction, and overall performance within the Lebanese banking sector.

The findings supported all three hypotheses:

1. Hypothesis 1: Centralization within organizational structures is negatively associated with employees' empowerment.
2. Hypothesis 2: Self-efficacy among employees positively predicts empowerment levels, mitigating the adverse effects of organizational structures on empowerment outcomes.
3. Hypothesis 3: The alignment between organizational structures and environmental demands positively correlates with employees' empowerment levels.

The empirical evidence not only reinforced existing theoretical frameworks but also provided practical insights for organizational leaders. The study's alignment with structural, motivational, and contingency theories highlighted the importance of individual psychological factors and organizational structures in shaping empowerment dynamics within the Lebanese banking sector.

Structural Perspective: The study underscores the pivotal role of sociopolitical support as a fundamental factor influencing organizational dynamics and employ-

ee experiences within Lebanese banks. Beyond reflecting leadership actions and organizational culture, sociopolitical support mirrors employees' expectations of fair treatment and support, shaped by organizational norms and industry standards. When expectations align with actual support received, employees experience heightened empowerment and motivation. Leadership style also emerged as a crucial determinant influencing empowerment outcomes. Different leadership styles, such as transformational, transactional, or servant leadership, exert distinct impacts on empowerment, job satisfaction, and employee engagement. Understanding these dynamics can provide valuable insights into empowerment outcomes within Lebanese banks and other organizational contexts.

Motivational Perspective The study highlights the significance of self-efficacy in predicting empowerment levels among employees. Higher self-efficacy enables employees to navigate organizational structures effectively, mitigating their adverse effects and enhancing empowerment. This underscores the importance of initiatives that build self-efficacy, such as training programs and mentorship, to foster a supportive work environment where employees feel valued and confident in their roles. Strengthening self-efficacy alongside promoting transparent communication and recognition can significantly boost employee engagement and retention.

Contingency Perspective: The findings emphasize the positive correlation between the alignment of organizational structures with environmental demands and employees' empowerment levels. Organizational adaptability and responsiveness to external conditions emerged as critical factors in effectively empowering employees. By fostering a culture of adaptability and innovation, organizations can align their structures with evolving environmental pressures, thereby enhancing employee empowerment. Leadership plays a crucial role in promoting this adaptability by

encouraging proactive problem-solving and supporting risk-taking initiatives that align with strategic goals.

The Emergence of Integrated Perspectives in Times of Crises: In the context of Lebanon's ongoing economic and political challenges, the integration of structural, motivational, and contingency perspectives becomes crucial. The volatile environment necessitates a holistic approach to empowerment that aligns structural elements with motivational strategies and adapts to external demands. This integrated perspective is essential for building resilient organizations capable of navigating crises and fostering long-term stability and growth. It underscores the urgency for organizational leaders and policymakers to address interconnected factors and create empowering work environments that support sustainable development amidst Lebanon's complex landscape.

Strategic Considerations: However, fostering a culture of adaptability and innovation poses challenges, particularly amid financial constraints faced by some banks in Lebanon. Factors such as solvency, liquidity, and financial returns amidst a financial crisis significantly influence banks' capacity to invest in empowerment initiatives. Larger, more stable banks may have resources to dedicate to workforce empowerment, enhancing employee satisfaction and organizational effectiveness. In contrast, smaller banks or those facing financial constraints may struggle to allocate resources to such initiatives, potentially impacting employee morale and overall performance.

Given these findings, it is imperative for organizational leaders and policymakers to tailor strategies that balance immediate financial concerns with sustainable organizational development. By prioritizing structural, motivational, and contingency

factors, organizations can create resilient and empowered work environments that enhance individual and organizational performance. This approach not only supports economic stability and growth within the Lebanese banking sector but also ensures that empowerment strategies remain responsive to internal and external pressures. Integrating these perspectives enables banks to navigate challenges effectively, contributing to sector-wide resilience and sustainable development.

Conclusion

This study thoroughly examined empowerment dynamics within the Lebanese banking sector, revealing the intricate interplay between organizational structures, individual motivations, and empowerment outcomes. Our findings offer valuable insights into the factors influencing employee empowerment. However, it's important to acknowledge several limitations. The reliance on self-report measures and cross-sectional data limits our ability to establish causality and track long-term trends. Future research should adopt longitudinal designs or mixed methods approaches to gain a more nuanced understanding of empowerment dynamics over time. Additionally, our exclusive focus on the Lebanese banking sector may limit the generalizability of our findings to other industries or cultural contexts, underscoring the need for diverse sectoral and cultural investigations.

Despite these limitations, our study holds significant practical implications for organizational leaders. Understanding the determinants of employee empowerment enables organizations to develop targeted strategies, such as promoting decentralized decision-making, clarifying role definitions, offering professional development opportunities, ensuring equitable rewards and recognition, and fostering a supportive organizational climate. These strategies cultivate a culture of empowerment, enhancing employee engagement, productivity, and overall effectiveness.

Moreover, fostering empowerment extends beyond organizational boundaries, carrying broader societal implications. Empowered employees are more likely to experience greater well-being and satisfaction, potentially catalyzing positive effects on their families, communities, and society at large. By cultivating empowering work environments, organizations play a crucial role in advancing social goals such as poverty reduction, gender equality, and inclusive economic growth.

To rebuild trust in Lebanese banks— alongside the return of deposits to all stakeholders (Hage Boutros, February 2024) – comprehensive reforms and initiatives are imperative. Transparency, accountability, enhanced regulation, and customer protection measures are essential components of rebuilding trust. Additionally, ethical conduct, professionalism, and social responsibility are crucial for restoring confidence among depositors, investors, the public as well as the employees. Implementing these strategies and initiatives will enable Lebanese banks to gradually rebuild trust and confidence among stakeholders, thereby significantly contributing to the stability and sustainability of the banking sector.

The added value of these findings lies in their profound implications for organizational management and policymaking. Policymakers and banking leaders must carefully navigate these dynamics when formulating policies and strategies. Encouraging a regulatory environment that supports both financial stability and employee empowerment is crucial for fostering a resilient and equitable banking sector. By drawing on structural, motivational, and contingency theories, policymakers can extract actionable information to inform policy development, economic resilience strategies, workforce development initiatives, and regulatory frameworks. Understanding the factors that underpin empowerment enables policymakers to design policies that incentivize organizations to cultivate empowering work environments characterized by decentralized decision-making, clear role delineation, and supportive organizational climates. These policies can enhance employee

engagement, resilience, and overall organizational effectiveness, ultimately contributing to a more resilient economy.

A lens for future studies: Future research can further advance our understanding of empowerment and its implications for organizational and societal well-being by exploring several key areas. Longitudinal studies and mixed methods approaches will be instrumental in providing a more comprehensive view of empowerment dynamics over time. Such studies can help establish causality and track long-term trends, offering deeper insights into how empowerment evolves within organizations. Additionally, expanding the scope of research to include diverse industries and cultural contexts will enrich our understanding of empowerment's universal applicability and contextual nuances. Comparative studies across different sectors and regions can uncover unique factors and strategies that influence empowerment, contributing to more tailored and effective interventions. Exploring specific aspects of empowerment, such as the role of technology, leadership styles, and organizational culture, can yield valuable insights. For instance, understanding how digital tools and remote work environments impact empowerment can inform strategies for fostering empowerment in the digital age. Investigating the influence of different leadership approaches on empowerment can help identify best practices for organizational leaders. Moreover, examining the interplay between structural, motivational, and contingency factors in various organizational settings can provide a holistic view of empowerment. Future studies should aim to integrate these perspectives to develop a comprehensive framework for understanding and promoting empowerment. By investigating these areas, future research can build on the foundation laid by this study, offering new insights and practical strategies for enhancing employee empowerment, organizational effectiveness, and societal well-being.

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APPENDIX 1– Survey:

Here are the survey questions categorized with their related constructs and variables:

Question	Construct	Variable	Related Finding
How often do you feel supported by your colleagues and supervisors?	Structural Empowerment	Sociopolitical Support	Descriptive Statistics, Correlation Analysis (Structural and Demographic Variables), Regression Model
How clear are you about your roles and responsibilities?	Role Clarity	Role Clarity	Descriptive Statistics, Correlation Analysis (Structural Variables), Regression Model
How satisfied are you with the opportunities for professional growth in your current role?	Structural Empowerment	Promotion Opportunities	Correlation Analysis (Structural and Demographic Variables)
How satisfied are you with the rewards and recognition you receive at work?	Structural Empowerment	Rewards	Correlation Analysis (Structural and Demographic Variables)
To what extent do you feel that your work has meaning and purpose?	Psychological Empowerment	Meaning	Regression Coefficients for Predicting Psychological Empowerment
How much impact do you feel you have on decisions that affect your work?	Psychological Empowerment	Impact	Regression Coefficients for Predicting Psychological Empowerment
How much autonomy do you feel you have in carrying out your job responsibilities?	Psychological Empowerment	Autonomy	Regression Coefficients for Predicting Psychological Empowerment

How confident are you in your ability to perform your job effectively?	Psychological Empowerment	Self-efficacy	Regression Coefficients for Predicting Psychological Empowerment
How often do you experience support from your organization regarding socio-political issues?	Structural Empowerment	Sociopolitical Support	Descriptive Statistics, Correlation Analysis (Structural and Demographic Variables), Regression Model
How do you perceive the clarity of communication regarding your career advancement opportunities?	Role Clarity	Role Clarity	Descriptive Statistics, Correlation Analysis (Structural Variables), Regression Model
How long have you been working in the banking sector?	Demographics	Employee Tenure	Descriptive Statistics
What is your age?	Demographics	Age	Correlation Analysis (Demographic Variables)
How satisfied are you with your current job security?	Structural Empowerment	Job Security	Correlation Analysis (Structural and Demographic Variables)
What is your seniority level within the organization?	Demographics	Seniority Level	Correlation Analysis (Demographic Variables), Regression Model
How satisfied are you with the level of support provided by your immediate supervisor?	Structural Empowerment	Supervisor Support	Correlation Analysis (Structural and Demographic Variables)